

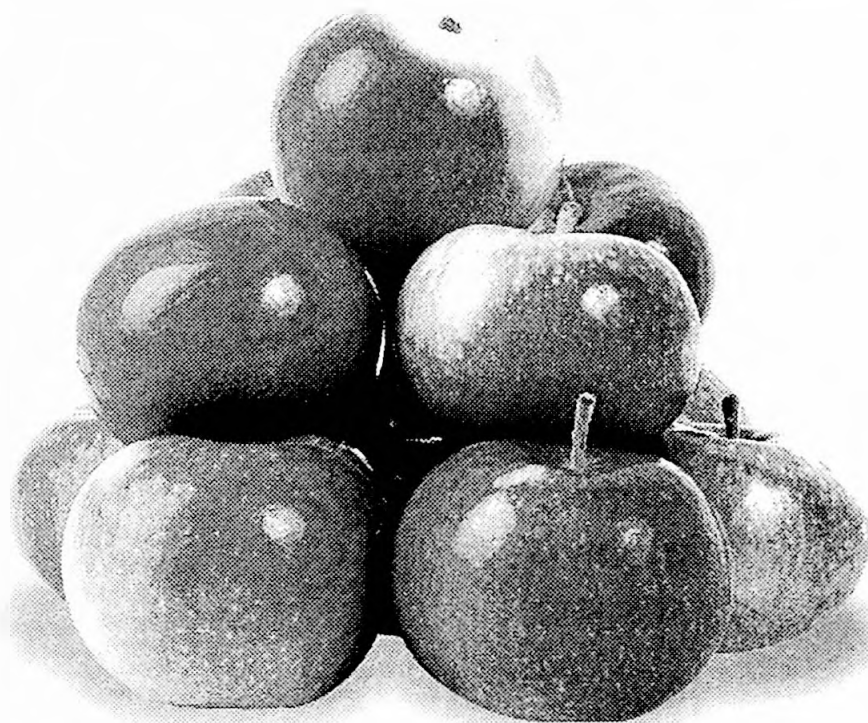
Eco-Sense



The Allergy and Environmental
Health Association of Canada
Ottawa Branch

Association allergies, santé et
environnement du Canada
Chapitre d'Ottawa

Good Things from the Valley: Organic Apples from Log Cabin Orchard



ALSO:

Smoke-Free Ottawa:
A Dream Come True!

Health Hazards of Natural Gas
in the Home

Controlling Infections with
Nutrition-What you Need to
Know

In this Issue:

Features

Are Mycoplasmas a Missing Link in "Fatigue" Illnesses?	4
Organic Apples: Good Things from the Valley	5
Pesticides: Some arguments from David Suzuki	6
Nutritional Protocols for Infections	7
Health Hazards of Natural Gas in the Home	8
Smoke-Free Ottawa: A Reality at Last! ..	11
Making Your Workplace Allergy-Free	12
West Nile Virus: Oppose Spraying	13

Sections

President's Message	3
Consumer Corner	10
Health Briefs	14
Book Reviews	15
Food for Thought	16
Meet Freezer Report	16
Source Book for Persons with Environmental Sensitivities: How to Order.....	16
Eco-Tips	18
Web Wisdom	18
Library News	19
Meeting Calendar	20

Eco-Sense

A tri-annual publication of the Ottawa Allergy and Environmental Health Association. Reprinting of original articles is permitted with appropriate acknowledgment.

Self-help, education, prevention

AEHA is a national registered charity operated by volunteers with branches in cities across Canada. Together we strive to promote awareness of environmental conditions that may be harmful to human health, and to bring individuals together for mutual support and education.

Join us! Membership is \$25 a year, and includes:

- access to informative meetings and workshops
- tri-annual newsletter *Eco-Sense*
- access to an extensive book and tape lending library
- access to organic meats and wild game at reasonable cost.

Our Thanks

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Donations welcome

As a non-profit organization whose income is based mainly on membership dues, we welcome your donations to allow us to carry out the important work of helping those with environmental sensitivities help themselves.

Volunteers always welcome! We are currently looking for a branch secretary to take minutes at monthly board meetings, and a new advertising manager for Eco-Sense.

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Deadline for Winter 2002 issue: Dec. 5, 2001

Good-bye smoke, good-bye little pesticide flags!



BY BARBARA LEIMSNER

As we get ready for fall, with its bountiful harvests and colourful leaves, I hope the new season finds all of you well and ready for a fresh year of activity with the AEHA. We've already lined up a series of excellent speakers, but more on that below.

Despite the excessively hot, smoggy weather this summer that aggravated the health problems of many of us with environmental sensitivities and respiratory problems, locally, there have been several very positive developments. The introduction of the Smoke-Free bylaw represents tremendous progress in "clearing the indoor air" in public places. Check the article on page 11 about how to register a complaint if you need to do so as the law is more strictly enforced starting in September.

Pesticides are next on the horizon! The unanimous Supreme Court decision this June allowing the town of Hudson, Quebec, to ban the cosmetic use of pesticides to protect the health of its citizens paves the way. Ottawa Mayor Bob Chiarelli says he is "very pleased" the Supreme Court has opened the door to a pesticide ban on private as well as public property.

Chiarelli said he expects city council to look for ways to mount a similar ban here — one that would prohibit pesticide use for cosmetic reasons anywhere in Ottawa. Ottawa Coun. Alex Cullen, who has led the fight to ban cosmetic pesticides on city property, said "the days of little flags warning people not to walk on the grass due to pesticide application are numbered." Quebec's environment minister is also "seriously considering" a province-wide ban on pesticide use for strictly aesthetic purposes in the wake of the Supreme Court ruling. Hundreds of municipalities are ready to follow Hudson's example.

In Halifax, where a cosmetic use of pesticide ban is already in effect, bylaws include clauses that prevent the use of pesticides within 50 metres of a person who faces medically documented health risks from exposure. That includes both homeowners and tenants. This is what we want for chemically sensitive persons

in this region and we will continue to work with the various organizations to make sure our collective voice is heard. Similarly, we must raise our objections about the possibility of spraying for West Nile virus as the media stirs up public fears and spreads misinformation on this issue. Please contact me or another Board member if you'd like to get involved in working around these issues.

Your Board has been busy arranging what we hope you'll agree is a fine series of educational talks this fall and winter. Our fall speaker series will be launched Sept. 20 with a very timely talk on "All About Home Air Filtration to Improve Your Indoor Air," followed on October 18 by Dr. Ross Mickelson speaking on "Children and Allergy: Recognizing and Treating Allergies in Children." On November 15, Dr. John Molot will address "Candida: Diagnosis and Treatment." (See details, page 20)

In January in the New Year, Linda Leeming, past president of the Canadian Homebuilder's Association, will tell her family's story of toxic exposure at home and her struggle with severe chemical sensitivity. Dr. Shiv Chopra, who recently won a discrimination case against Health Canada at the Canadian Human Rights Commission, will address how to fight for your rights and also the issue of food safety in Canada. (*date to be confirmed*) Watch for other details on the Web site and in your next *Eco-Sense*.

As always, your Board members and I welcome your suggestions and participation.

Are Mycoplasmas a Missing Link in "Fatigue" Illnesses? Prominent Researcher Says Yes

BY BARBARA LEIMSNER

At a conference on environmental illness last May in Ottawa, I heard about exciting research from a leading U.S. cell researcher, Dr. Garth Nicolson. He spoke about little-known mycoplasmas as a possible missing link in many chronic illnesses, and afterwards I had the opportunity to discuss his research with him briefly.

An article in the September 2001 issue of *Alternative Medicine Magazine*, "Mycoplasmas: The Missing Link in Fatiguing Illnesses", which refers to Dr. Nicolson's research, also flagged these "mysterious microorganisms" as possible culprits in a number of diseases, including rheumatoid arthritis, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, multiple sclerosis, Gulf War illness, Crohn's disease and other inflammatory bowel diseases and even aggressive cancers. Nicolson's laboratory research shows that most people with chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia had multiple mycoplasma infections.

Dr. Nicolson and his wife Nancy, who are eminent U.S. researchers in molecular and cellular biology, put their knowledge to work in examining mycoplasmas when their daughter Sharon, a U.S. military helicopter crew chief, returned from the Gulf War with symptoms like those associated with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Some 100,000 soldiers returned with similar symptoms – mainly to be told their symptoms were stress related or psychological. Sharon dramatically improved after being put on a course of antibiotic therapy, and many others have been treated successfully. This field of research and the treatment protocol developed by the Nicolsons and their associates may hold promise for many people with chronic fatigue syndrome and other conditions, for which no other treatment has helped. Their Web site is listed below for those who want to find out more.

What are mycoplasmas? According to *Alternative Medicine*, they "are the smallest self-replicating organisms known to science. Viruses are even smaller, but they lack the genetic machinery to be self-replicating...only a few can be found in the blood and tissues throughout the human body. Not all mycoplasmas found in humans are pathogenic (disease-causing)."

How are mycoplasmas linked to fatigue? The article calls them "parasitic bacteria". To quote Dr. Nicolson, "Once in the cell, they steal lipids (fats) like cholesterol

from the mitochondria, the components of a cell that produce energy. This makes the mitochondria 'leaky', and they lose electrons. This is similar to a battery running down when the insulation around the battery is removed. This may be why patients with intracellular pathogenic mycoplasmas are almost always fatigued. They have run their cellular batteries down, so that less high energy batteries are available, and they are exhausted at the cellular level."

In summary, the author writes that mycoplasmas can wreak havoc on the immune system, either stimulating or suppressing it, because they hide inside the hosts' own cells. They can trigger cells to become cancerous, and invade the lining of blood vessels. Their constantly changing structure makes them elusive, so they easily contaminate diagnostic labs and vaccines. What is more, the organisms appear to be highly infectious, being transmitted to others close to infected persons and even their pets!

Detection of mycoplasmas is challenging because they are not detectable using normal microbiology techniques. The Nicolsons developed a special test to pinpoint genetic elements of mycoplasma in Gulf War patients, and significantly, found that over 40 per cent tested positive for the "invasive" form of mycoplasma, *M. fermentans*. The so-called "stealth virus" is now being said to be a contributing or "co-factor" with other bacteria or viruses in a long list of conditions including CFS/CFIDS, fibromyalgia, lupus, multiple sclerosis, psoriasis, scleroderma, Crohn's disease, solid cancers, leukemia, lymphoma, Lyme Disease and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease).

The treatment for mycoplasmal infections is long-term antibiotics and other treatments such as probiotics and nutritional supplementation for strengthening the immune system.

For publications and documents on CFS, FMS, autoimmune diseases and other chronic illnesses, see the Institute for Molecular Medicine's Web site, www.immed.org or call 714-799-7177. A second Web site for the certified reference laboratory, International Molecular Diagnostics, contains information about diagnostic testing and disease at www.imd-lab.com.

Organic Apples: Good Things from Log Cabin Orchard

BY BARBARA LEIMSNER

Gordon Hawkes was inexperienced, all right, but he had a dream when he purchased a 33-acre apple orchard called Log Cabin Orchard north of Osgoode, Ontario near Ottawa in 1996 —to grow apples organically.

But all the experts he consulted at the local agricultural college and elsewhere told him it couldn't be done—that to grow edible apples required massive doses of pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, foliar supplements and more. Hawkes was shocked to learn the amount of pesticides and insecticides routinely applied by commercial apple growers during the growing season, and the level of toxicity of these chemicals. Getting some on his skin during application, he learned, could cause severe seizures and even death in minutes! And the insecticides were instructed to be sprayed five times each season, as were the fungicides.

But his family lived on the property, and as Hawkes watched the butterflies, birds and animals on his new acreage, he was aware that blasting the area with toxic chemicals to kill apple pests and diseases would harm them, too. These poisons were indiscriminate, guaranteeing the death of anything in their path. Hawkes just wasn't happy about turning his orchard into "a killing field." He looked for a better way.

Despite being repeatedly told that growing apples organically simply couldn't be done, Hawkes persisted. All winter, he searched the Internet and libraries and consulted Agriculture Canada and other organic growers to find out their methods. Today, Log Cabin Orchard is a fully certified organic orchard (which requires at least three years of chemical-free growing), which supplies local markets and has a pick-your-own operation. It also sells apple butter and dried apples in its store.

Today, he uses methods including garlic sprays and hot-pepper waxes to repel rather than kill bugs, hangs red sticky balls and sticky yellow plastic traps, and has had success spraying with fish emulsion and seaweed extract as foliar supplements. He allows the grass under the trees to grow naturally, and brought in plants to attract more beneficial insects. This, in turn, led to a burgeoning toad and frog population. Soon, hundreds of birds began visiting the orchard. Hawkes only cuts the grass under the trees twice a year, and leaves it as mulch, eliminating the need to fertilize and

leading to a proliferation of microbial life and earthworms. He has also planted hundreds of disease resistant trees, hopefully minimizing the need for pest controls.

By gradually re-establishing an ecological balance in the orchard, Hawkes has demonstrated that growing organically certainly is possible, although he acknowledges it hasn't always been easy!

"I can assure you that it's safer, more fulfilling, and less stressful than suiting up like a 21st century chemical warrior and dispersing poisons into blossoming apple trees about to bear fruit," wrote Hawkes in *Organic Gardening Magazine* (Dec./Jan. 2000 issue.)

You can visit Log Cabin Orchard just north of Osgoode Village, near Greely in Eastern Ontario. Call 613-826-1596 for hours and directions.



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Pesticides: "They must be safe...the government approved them"

Many of us still encounter the same argument from neighbours and friends, despite recent publicity about the many possible health hazards of pesticides and herbicides following the Supreme Court decision upholding the municipality of Hudson's right to ban the cosmetic use of these products to protect the health of citizens.

"But if they aren't safe, they wouldn't be allowed on our shelves. They must be safe—the government approved them."

Here's what David Suzuki says on that issue:

"Approximately 7,000 different herbicide and pesticide products are currently on the market in Canada. These products contain hundreds of different active agents, a large number of which were approved before 1960, when their long-term effects were not well known. Many are potent neurological or metabolic poisons. Only a handful has been fully tested for carcinogenic or mutagenic effects. In addition to active agents, they contain some 5,000 other ingredients, some of which have also been linked to cancer and other illnesses.

The pesticide industry argues that their chemicals are safe and represent little health risk. And they point out that few studies have exclusively implicated their products with illness in humans. That's partly true; the connections between pesticides and health problems in humans are not always clear cut. For example, more than 15 scientific studies have linked Parkinson's disease in people to environmental conditions such as working in the agricultural or chemical industries, or living in farming communities that regularly use pesticides. But there are no definitive studies showing that any particular pesticide currently in use in Canada can actually cause Parkinson's.

Proving a direct causal link between pesticides and disease in humans can be very difficult because there are so many factors involved. The amount of exposure to a pesticide, duration, combination with other chemicals, age of the exposed individual and his or her genetic predisposition all play a role. But there is a great deal of evidence that many of these pesticides, either alone or in combination, are involved in many diseases, including Parkinson's, cancers such as non-Hodgkins lymphoma (which has risen by 73 per cent since 1973), asthma, and others.

For example, two years ago, European researchers found that Swedish sufferers of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma were 2.7 times more likely to have been exposed to the herbicide MCPA (found in weed-and-feed type products) and 2.3 times more likely to have been exposed to the herbicide glyphosate (Round-Up). Some of these products may also be more detrimental to the health of children because of their smaller size and developing organs. A study by the Ontario College of Family Physicians last year, for example, concluded that children face undeniable risks from pesticide exposure.


Humans today face a barrage of industrial chemicals, from pesticides and herbicides to motor vehicle and diesel exhaust, PCBs, cleaning agents, solvents and others. We breathe combinations of these chemicals in the air, drink them in our water and eat them in our food. Yet when we test them, we do it individually because studying combinations quickly escalates into an impossible number of variables. Given our valid suspicions, shouldn't the burden of proof be on the manufacturers to prove that their products are safe rather than the public to prove that they are not?"

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Controlling Infectious Disease: Nutritional Protocols

The following short-term treatment protocols were provided by Dr. Jennifer Armstrong, Environmental Medicine, Ottawa.

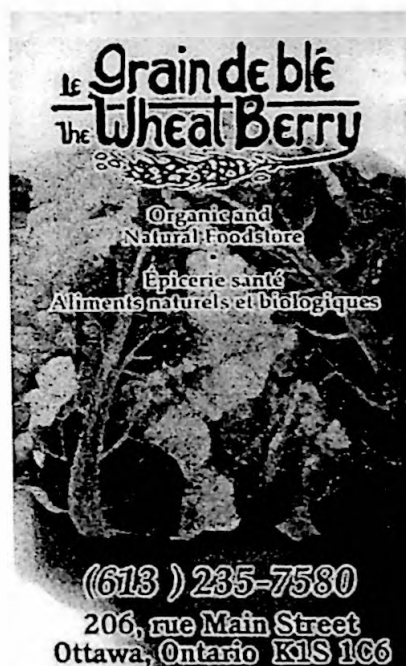
Here's the recommended short-term treatment (three to seven days) for acute infection:

- **Diet:** Eliminate all simple sugars, as they inhibit white blood cells' ability to fight infection. (It's good to eliminate coffee, too, as it is also hard on the immune system.)
- **Take Vitamin C** to tolerance, every one to two hours as needed. (To tolerance means until you get diarrhea. You may need to take Vitamin C that is corn free if you are allergic to corn; it must say "free of corn" or "free of dextrose" on the label.)
- **Vitamin A**, 100,000 to 150,000 IU, twice daily (for three to five days only); take proportionately lower doses for children. Do not use Vitamin A during pregnancy. Vitamin A is available in dropper form, which is good for sore throats, but contains glycerin (not good for those with glycerin allergy.)
- **Micellized Vitamin E**, 100 IU, one drop four times daily on an empty stomach. This is also good for sore throats, but also contains glycerin.
- **Intravenous protocols** may be needed if indicated by the severity of infection. IV Vitamin C and minerals are excellent for mononucleosis.
- **Use zinc (gluconate) lozenges** for colds, 10-25 mg, four to six times daily, for the short-term only. You may suck on a zinc citrate or zinc gluconate capsule. If it becomes quite bitter or metallic, you know your zinc levels are improving.
- **Echinacea and goldenseal (Hydrastis).** An excellent form of this is Phytogen, made by Thorne. It has the following ingredients: echinacea angustifolia, 300 mg; hydrastis canadensis (golden seal) 75 mg; astragalus, 150 mg; ligusticum, 150 mg; shisandra, 150 mg. It can be taken two, three times daily until you are feeling better, then two, twice daily. It is good to go off after three weeks and use again when needed.

- **Colloidal silver**, 1 teaspoon initially, then 1 teaspoon four times daily for adults, proportionately less for children.
- **Olive leaf extract**, 500 mg, three to four times daily for viral infections.
- **Neutralization dose** to flu serum done in the clinic office using Serial Dilution Endpoint Titration. Weekly "allergy" shot of flu serum can be preventative to viral infections. Once you catch a virus, the injections can be increased to daily until you are better.
- **Fish oil capsules**, 6000 mg, twice daily if you can tolerate.

For bladder infection:

- a) Vitamin C to bowel tolerance, four to six times daily.
- b) Cranberry pills, 500 mg, one three times daily.
- c) D-mannose powder, 1/4 teaspoon, three to six times daily, depending on severity. Effective only against E. coli.



Health Hazards of Natural Gas in the Home

BY AGNES MALOUF & DAVID WIMBERLEY

Thinking of cooking with gas? Think again... it is tempting to believe industry and government promises that if only we could plug into this rich resource, we could see our fuel bills drop. But would we still feel the same way if we were to learn that, in trying to save those hard-earned dollars, we were undermining our health by polluting the very air we breathe in our homes?

It may be discouraging to hear, but now is the time to listen to what the experts have to say before we make what may be the wrong decision for us and our families.

Living with natural gas can be a health hazard for people who are healthy and for those who are already ill. It is especially risky for people who have weakened immune systems, including those who are asthmatic, allergic or chemically sensitive. Gas appliances create a constant low-level exposure to gas, which can cause or increase illnesses. Natural gas is a sensitizer, which means that exposure can lead to intolerance and adverse reactions both to it and other substances in our environment.

The British medical journal, *The Lancet*, reported in 1996 that the use of domestic gas appliances, particularly gas stoves, was linked to increased asthma, respiratory illness, and impaired lung function, especially in young women. Women using gas stoves had double the respiratory problems of women cooking with electric stoves. The same study showed that using exterior fans which vented the cooking fumes outside did not reduce adverse effects of gas.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) *Clean Air Guide* (1993) identified gas water heaters, furnaces, unvented space heaters and cook stoves as significant contributors to chemical contamination in the home. They recommended that gas appliances be replaced with electrical ones to reduce indoor air pollution.

In a combined series of studies of 47,000 patients, doctors found that "the most important sources of indoor air pollution responsible for generating (environmental) illness were the gas cook stoves, hot water heaters, and furnaces", writes Dr. Bill Rea of the Dallas Environmental Health Centre.

"Traditional natural gas is a pollutant chemical that

can worsen both classical allergy and chemical sensitivity. This effect has been seen mostly in areas where natural gas is in widespread use," wrote Dr. Gerald Ross, past president of the American Academy of Environmental Medicine in 1997.

"For the chemically susceptible individual, this may be the worst form of fuel," writes Dr. T. G. Randolph. Surprisingly, his studies also found that when gas stoves were removed from the home of a person with chemical sensitivities, not only did their health improve, but so did the health of all family members.

Impact on Children

Other studies have found that children living in homes with gas stoves had more than double the risk for respiratory symptoms, including asthma. Asthma patients who use a gas stove seven or more times a week are found to double their risk of emergency room treatment. Infants who grow up in household with gas are almost twice as likely to develop childhood asthma as those who live with second-hand smoke. (Second-hand smoke itself more than doubles a child's risk of developing asthma.) These studies have all been published in respected medical journals.

When natural gas is burned, as in cooking and heating, the chemicals create nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, fine particles, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds (including formaldehyde) as well as other chemicals. Just imagine what you are breathing when you bend over a gas cook stove to stir your food or when you open your oven door. This stuff sticks to your food, so you eat it as well. It sticks to clothes in gas dryers, so you are covering your skin with it. It is lighter than air so it rises up into your living and sleeping areas, concentrating higher up near your head. This is one reason why gas is more of a health hazard than fuel oil, which is heavier than air and thus sinks.

It has been estimated that when a typical gas oven and three burners are turned on, they release the same amount of combustion by-products as a typical gas water heater. Regulations require that all gas water heaters (and gas furnaces) be connected to a chimney or vented directly outdoors. Not so for stoves. Gas dryers are also not vented through chimneys, but through side vents. Side vents are usually located low on buildings, and vented fumes can re-enter the living areas through windows, doors and cracks.

Contributes to Mould Growth

At a conference on air quality and children's health sponsored by the New Brunswick Lung Association, much attention was given to the respiratory problems caused by moulds. Natural gas turns out to be a contributor to mould growth.

One of the principle products of gas combustion is water vapour. Cooking with gas or burning gas in any way without perfect venting generates considerable amounts of moisture. When this moisture remains inside a building, it is enough to be a significant contributor to moulds. This excess moisture also provides better growing conditions for dust mites, viruses and bacteria.

Natural gas brings harmful chemicals into homes through the methane it contains. Methane (which gives the flame its blue colour as it does in propane), is an asphyxiant. It typically contains impurities and additives including radon and other radioactive materials, BTEX (benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene), organometallic compounds such as methylmercury, organoarsenic, and organolead. Mercaptan odorants are also added to natural gas so that it can be detected by scent before reaching explosive levels.

The components of the gas itself, as well as products of incomplete combustion including nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and others, have health implications individually and synergistically, as they combine with each other and with other indoor pollutants.

"Natural gas is dangerous for several reasons," says health advocate Helen Lofgren. "Even if you don't use the gas appliance, it is always there, leaking into the environment. It is dangerous for everybody, even those who don't notice its effects. If apartment buildings converted to gas stoves and water heaters, the health effects could be quite serious," Lofgren adds. "Unplanned leaks and the danger of explosion compound the risks of gas."

Is There a Safe Way to Use Gas?

Is there a safe way to use natural gas in the home? Yes and no. If you are going to use gas furnaces or water heaters, the adverse effects can be lessened considerably by putting them in a separate building downwind of the house with underground connections. Failing this, putting a state-of-the-art, totally sealed furnace and water heater in a separate sealed room with outside air intakes ducted directly into their combustion chambers, and automatic fans forcing exhaust up a chimney that extends above the roofline, will result in

a substantial lessening of harmful effects. No side venting should ever be allowed.

Even taking all these precautions, when combustion gases leaving a chimney cool, they become heavier than air. Depending on wind conditions, they can re-enter the living space. And there is really no way at present to reduce the risk of gas appliances like stoves and clothes dryers. It is safest not to have any combustion inside the house.

Natural gas hearings in Nova Scotia have looked at whether there should be a natural gas pipeline and who should own it. But there has been no government assessment or public hearings into the health effects of home use of natural gas.

Natural gas isn't all bad news. Using gas to fire up the generators that produce electricity to heat our homes and run our appliances and in large industrial settings makes environmental and economic sense. Natural gas is a relatively clean-burning fuel, and it is less polluting of our air than the coal and oil fuels we have traditionally burned.

But let's keep it far away from the air we breathe inside our houses, apartment buildings and schools. If we consider health-care costs and the impact of living with illness, bringing natural gas into our homes is not a sensible choice.

For more information:

Natural gas Web sites
www.geocities.com/Rainforest/6847 (Note especially the Medical-Environmental Report) and www.gascape.org/
The Healthy Home Handbook: All You Need to Know to Rid Your Home of Health and Safety Hazards, by John Warde, Random House Inc., 1997.

Reprinted from Nova Scotia AEHA Update, Summer 2001.

Agnes Malouf is a teacher and member of the Board of the NSAEHA.

David Wimberly is an environmentalist who has been concerned about the health hazards of natural gas for many years. He can be reached by e-mail at ag487@chebucto.ns.ca for more information.



Consumer Corner

First spotted at the Ottawa Health Show are **Country Cuisine Gourmet Mixes**. Made near Eganville, Ont., these organic pre-mixed baking products for cookies, pancakes, muffins, biscuits, yeast-free breads and even soups such as lentil and pea include many wheat-free, sugar-free alternatives. Organic spelt, oat, kamut and rye flours are used. (I've tried the sugar-free oatmeal apple-sauce cookies—yum!) All mixes cost \$3.90 each from the producer, or \$3.50 each if ordering eight or more. Products shipped by courier for delivery the next business day. Phone 613-628-3387 Fax: 613-628-9201 e-mail cuisine@nrtco.net. Also available at Wheat Berry and Saslove's Meats.

New on the shelf at Rainbow Foods are **root chips**, crunchy potato-chip-like root vegetable snack that includes carrots, beets, sweet potatoes, parsnips, canola oil, flour and sea salt. \$1.99 for a 50g bag. Manufactured in Toronto by The Root Chip Co. Call 416- 255-5573 for more information.

Owner Jocelyn LeRoy at **Trillium Bakery** has been busy trying **new cookie recipes** and has made two new varieties — spelt flax honey cookies and spelt maple. They sell for \$1.25 each. She's also working on millet rolls and potato buns, but hasn't perfected them yet! Available at two locations, Richmond Road and Belmont at Bank St.

Fresh or frozen organic **spelt pasta** is available from Parma Ravioli on Richmond Road. They will take your name and call you for fresh special order pasta, or check the freezer.

New at the new high-end department store Les Ailes de la Mode at Bayshore Shopping Centre is **Origins**, an **extensive product line of personal care products** without artificial fragrance. Scents include ginger and peppermint, and products include moisturizing creams, body washes and scrubs and shaving creams and soaps. Although not inexpensive, samples are available for some products and they list all ingredients and are fully refundable if they cause any reaction. (Note that this "natural" line is located in a separate area at the store entrance but is beside the fragrance section so may not be tolerable to some.)

Spotted at Wheat Berry: **Druide hypoallergenic, fragrance-free aromatherapy shampoo** for hypersensitive persons. Free of sodium lauryl sulfate and chemical preservatives or artificial colours. Sells for \$8.20 for 250 ml.

Now available at Herb and Spice stores is **organic sourdough bread** using all natural ingredients from the Harrowsmith Bread Company. Bread selections include soya and millet, rye and sunflower seed, olive and herb, kamut, multi-grain and cinnamon, raisin and pecan. (See www.harrowsmithbread.com or call 613-540-3007 for locations and new products.)

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Wild Game
moose and venison: usually \$2.00/lb

For further details please contact Monique Rook at 613-256-5313. *Oui, je parle français.*

* For information about joining AEHA Ottawa or attending the monthly meetings (all welcome) please call AEHA Hotline at 860-2342 or (819) 777-5848.

Smoke-Free Ottawa: A Dream Come True!

BY CARMELA GRAZIANI

Ottawa City Council made history on April 25, 2001, voting unanimously in favour of the strongest smoke-free by-law in Canada. Effective August 1, 2001, smoking is completely banned in all public places and workplaces, with no allowance for designated smoking rooms.

The Public Places By-law prohibits smoking in any indoor area to which the public has access, including restaurants, bars, bowling alleys, bingo, billiard and legion halls, casinos, recreation centres, arenas, shopping malls, private clubs with employees, the Rideau Carleton Raceway Slots, and taxicabs and limousines. The Workplace By-law prohibits smoking in any enclosed area in which an employee works, including common areas such as washrooms, lobbies and parking garages.

The 100% smoke-free by-laws create a level playing field for all businesses in Ottawa. Independent studies based on sales tax receipts in smoke-free cities throughout North America show that within a few months of going smoke-free, overall, restaurants and bars experience either similar or increased revenue.

However, not all businesses are happy with the by-laws. The 153-member Pubs and Bars Coalition of Ontario (PUBCO) launched a legal challenge on July 23 on the grounds, among others, that Ottawa City Council does not have the right under Section 12 of the Ontario Tobacco Control Act to prohibit smoking in restaurants and bars. Lawyers for PUBCO and the City of Ottawa were scheduled to appear in court on August 27, when PUBCO's lawyers were to ask for a stay of the by-law. Earlier this year, provincial courts dismissed legal challenges of the smoke-free by-laws in Waterloo and Guelph.

Over the summer, the Ottawa Council on Smoking and Health and the City of Ottawa's Public Health Unit ran public education campaigns, encouraging the community to support a Smoke-Free Ottawa. The Public Health Unit mailed information kits to more than 20,000 workplaces, while by-law enforcement officers visited 1,100 public places, educating business owners and employees. During the first month of implementation, by-law officers issued warnings only. As of September 4, when the grace period ended, any employee, patron or proprietor convicted of an offence under the by-law is subject to a fine of \$255 for a first offence and up to \$5,000 for subsequent offences.

The by-laws protect the public and employees, especially children, seniors and service industry workers who are at higher risk of exposure to second-hand smoke. Second-hand smoke is the third leading cause of preventable death in Canada, killing an estimated 3,000 Canadians per year, including 100 people in Ottawa. Exposure to second-hand smoke causes heart disease, strokes, lung cancer, ear infections, asthma, chronic bronchitis, pneumonia, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Smoke-free by-laws are a growing trend in North America. In Canada, 45 cities have banned smoking in restaurants and 31 cities have banned smoking in bars. Many U.S. jurisdictions, including New York City and the States of California, Vermont, and Utah have smoke-free legislation.

Carmela Graziani is a volunteer with the Ottawa Council on Smoking and Health.

Editor's Note: Call the City of Ottawa at 580-2400 for more information or to register a complaint.

Web sites with information on second-hand smoke and smoke-free by-laws:

- City of Ottawa: www.city.ottawa.on.ca (select City Services, select Bylaw Services, select Smoke-Free By-laws)
- Ottawa Council on Smoking and Health: www.smokefreeottawa.com
- Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada: www.smoke-free.ca
- Non-Smokers' Rights Association: www.nsra-adnf.ca
- Ontario Tobacco-Free Network: www.theotn.org
- Report on Environmental Tobacco Smoke by the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit: www.camh.net/otru/ETSreportMay2001.pdf
- www.smokefreeair.org
- www.repace.com

Making Your Workplace Allergy-Free

BY LAUREL HYATT

Headaches, sneezes, nausea, dizziness, fatigue, muscle pain—they could be symptoms that co-workers are having allergic reactions to the work environment. If the problem isn't addressed, it could lead to lost productivity and morale, increased absenteeism and health benefits costs, and even on-the-job accidents if people are feeling drowsy from the use of allergy medicines. Those with severe allergies could claim a disability and push for accommodation.

Doctors are more frequently diagnosing people with environmental illness, chemical hypersensitivity, and fragrance sensitivity—just a few of the problems created by substances in the work environment. Everything from perfumes to paint fumes can make people sick. Environmental factors often trigger reactions in people with asthma. We're seeing more attention paid to sick building syndrome, where industrial and office buildings with poor air quality are causing headaches and other symptoms in employees who don't otherwise have allergies. It's the modern-day occupational hazard.

While accommodating people with allergies isn't easy, here are some steps you can take to clear the air, so to speak. [Editor's note: The AEHA believes accommodating people is often a matter of the employer working closely with the person with the disability to address their specific concerns, and can prove workable in many cases.]

Helping Everyone

Many measures to reduce allergies will benefit everyone in the workplace. Providing fresh air is essential, even where employees don't have specific allergies. If the refit of the building is too costly, consider using portable air filters in key areas, or near the work areas of those who suffer from severe allergies.

Many buildings have air-tight windows. Ones that open to let in fresh air are better for allergies. Try to make at least some of the windows open partly to the outside. Provide filters on ventilation ducts and have them cleaned regularly. Some people are even allergic to airborne moulds and fungi.

Adding plants to the work environment can help clean the air naturally. The best ones to remove toxins are spider plants, aloe vera, Boston fern, English ivy, philodendrons, and golden pothos.

Most Canadian workplaces are smoke-free by law. But if you do have a smoking area, make sure it is well ventilated and that smoke doesn't circulate throughout the building. Never allow smoking in common areas.

A fragrance ban is another move, but is a tricky one. If you do go fragrance-free, get everyone on side to support the policy. Educate co-workers about how chemicals in fragrances can affect air quality and impact everyone, including customers who visit the workplace. Explain it's for health reasons, not a personal dislike of certain scents. Mention the policy during orientation of new employees.

Enforcing a fragrance-free ban is also sensitive. Some employers flash reminders to leave scents at home when employees log onto computers and send offenders home to shower—with unscented soap, of course.

Stop using pesticides and herbicides on the grounds of your building. Have the groundskeepers use ladybugs to keep unwanted pests down or pull weeds instead of killing them with chemicals. Ditto for toxic cleaning products used inside the workplace. Substitute non-toxic products such as baking soda.

Helping those with Allergies

Workers with known allergies to specific triggers can be accommodated with little fuss. Allow them more frequent breaks (totalling the same as others' rest periods, to be fair) to go outside for fresh air. Let them wear a respirator if they choose.

Have workers with sensitivities post a "fragrance-free zone" sign on their work area. Anyone wearing perfume, scented shampoo or scented deodorants should communicate by e-mail or telephone.

Replace carpets with tile or wood floors. If a specific task makes someone ill, consider changing their duties to eliminate their exposure to a certain substance.

If these ideas don't help, you may need to allow people with severe allergies to work from home or work off-hours with fewer people in the workplace. Do this during construction or workplace renovations if someone gets ill from dust or paint fumes.

Regular carpet cleaning, floor waxing and other maintenance can also make people sick—give them warning and let them work at home, in another office, another floor, or outside until the fumes subside. Schedule such cleaning or renovations after hours to reduce exposure for everyone.

This article first appeared in the June 2001 issue of Workplace Today®, called "Making Your Workplace Allergy Free." Laurel Hyatt is contributing editor.

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West Nile Virus: The "Cure" is Worse than the Disease

Did you know...

- According to Statistics Canada, in 1997, 8,000 people died across Canada from pneumonia and influenza. In contrast, the West Nile virus has claimed 10 lives in three years in North America.
- That in a 12-month period ending March 21, New York State researchers identified 1,263 birds that died carrying the West Nile virus, while 1,953 birds died from pesticides!

New York Times, June 4, 2001

Here are some points to use in letters to the editor, for radio talk shows and with your neighbours if there is a move to widespread pesticide spraying against the West Nile virus, as well as two Web sites where you can get more detailed information:

Only those with weak immune systems will be

susceptible to the West Nile virus. Pesticides weaken the immune system. Governments should promote good eating habits, exercise, and the like to strengthen the immune system and resist infections. Health Canada states that pregnant women should not be exposed to pesticides. The Government of Quebec states that the groups that are more susceptible to the harmful effects of pesticides are the fetus, children, pregnant women and the elderly.

Pesticides damage the environment, and our pollinators, that is, the birds, butterflies, and bees. Pesticides also kill the natural predators of mosquitoes, and this will result in larger mosquito populations. Stronger strains of mosquitoes will be bred with pesticide use.

For more information check out the letter sent by doctors and scientists at the West Nile virus link at the Web site:

<http://www.cap-quebec.com>

<http://www.sensibilisation-pesticides.qc.ca>

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Health News Briefs

Medical Errors, Illegible Prescriptions Kill Patients

A report at the annual convention of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) suggests that medication errors might be to blame for as many as 2,500 deaths a year in Canada. Errors by both patients who misread instructions and the poor writing by doctors on prescription notes may be causing potentially fatal medication errors. Said Dr. Stuart MacLeod, professor of clinical epidemiology at McMaster University, "It's becoming inescapably evident that adverse drug reactions are the fifth or sixth commonest cause of death in North America—preventable and unpreventable. There are many more people dying of prescription drug reactions than are dying of HIV. We can't ignore it." The CMA is introducing an online course on safe medication practices for its 50,000 members.

Ottawa Citizen, Aug. 13, 2001

Herbs can Kill, too

Patients taking herbal medicines such as ginseng, echinacea and St. John's Wort before surgery are at risk of life-threatening complications including bleeding, heart attack or allergic reactions, says a study by researchers at the University of Chicago published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. From 1993 to 1998, there were 101 reported deaths where reaction to a herbal remedy was suspected.

Ottawa Citizen, July 11, 2001

War Vets and Depleted Uranium

Soldiers in a tank hit by a depleted uranium (DU) shell could inhale enough radioactive dust to double their risk of dying from lung cancer, concludes a new report by the Royal Society in London. But the risks from DU to others on the battlefield are so small as to be undetectable. Shells containing about 270 tonnes of DU have been fired by U.S. forces in the Gulf War and the Balkans over the past 10 years, and controversy over the potential human health risks continues. Britain's leading scientific society estimates that soldiers could receive radiation doses up to 55 times the international safety limit—20 millisieverts a year for workers in the nuclear industry. Britain's Low Level Radiation Campaign calls the report "grossly inadequate" and says enough is already known about illness in soldiers and their children to make DU weapons illegal.

New Scientist, May 26, 2001

Organics Riding a Natural High

U.S. consumers can now look for the organics label and buy with confidence, with legislation for labelling and

standardizing organic foods scheduled to be fully implemented by 2002. Organic foods account for an estimated \$10 billion or two per cent of the total food market in the U.S. In Canada, organic retail sales are expected to rise from \$0.7 billion in 1997 to \$3.1 billion in 2005, or an average annual growth of 20 per cent. The industry expects its market share to increase to 10 per cent of the Canadian retail market by 2010. Canada is regarded as an ideal country for producing organic food because of its fertile land and cold climate, which reduces pests and disease.

Canada's Healthy Living Guide, July 2001

Scientists Alarmed by Sperm Quality Decline

Scientists from around the world are alarmed by a dramatic increase in genetically damaged human sperm—a trend that is not only causing infertility in men, but also childhood cancers in the offspring of those who can reproduce. It's now estimated that up to 85 per cent of the sperm produced by a healthy male is DNA-damaged, a leading authority on the subject revealed at an international conference held in Montreal this June 21-23. For the last 20 years, scientists have known about declining sperm counts. But researchers are now learning that the quality of human sperm is also steadily eroding and might be causing birth defects as well as brain cancer and leukemia in children. Abnormal sperm is also being blamed for a global increase in testicular cancer.

Scientists believe that when a DNA-damaged sperm fertilizes a woman's egg, it can trigger a mutation of a key gene in the embryo. Scientists suspect a wide range of environmental causes for the abnormal sperm, from exposure to pesticides and heavy metals to electromagnetic radiation. "We are all exposed to 10 times more electromagnetic radiation than our forefathers," said John Aitken, head of biological sciences at the University of Newcastle in Australia. "It's all the electrical appliances we use, including microwave [cell] phones." *Aaron Derfel, Montreal Gazette, June 22, 2001.*

Doctor's College Faces Shakeup

A shakeup is looming at the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons in the wake of growing criticism over how it handles patient complaints and disciplines doctors. College registrar Dr. John Bonn is leaving the top post, sources say. The surprise move comes after a quarterly meeting of the governing council. Health Minister Tony Clement has vowed to overhaul the legislation governing the watchdog and ensure the public has a greater say in how doctors are regulated. The timing of the changes follow a *Toronto Star* investigation in May that highlighted the secrecy that surrounds complaints against doctors at the college. Bonn has held the post for four years.

Toronto Star, June 27, 2001.



Book Reviews

Live Right 4 Your Type
by Dr. Peter J. D'Adamo
Published by Putnam, 2001

Reviewed by Jane Wilson

Dr. Adamo, who is a real physician, builds on his two earlier books, *Eat Right 4 Your Type* and *Cook Right 4 Your Type*, with this text. To some degree, the basic material on the background of the approach is repeated in this book, but Dr. D'Adamo has expanded the information to include suggestions on lifestyle, stress management and exercise, as appropriate for each blood type.

The basic idea is that each blood type (A, B, O and AB) represents a sort of genetic history and as a result, each blood type, because of specific blood type antigens, benefits from certain groups of foods and certain approaches to life. For example, people with Type O blood may tend to be "Type A" personalities and so need to adopt strategies to minimize stress and get more exercise. Type A blood types need to incorporate rest into their daily life and eat more vegetables.

But this makes it all seem simple and the doctor stresses at the outset that it is not: "It would be ridiculous simplification to suggest that there are only four types of people in the world," he writes. "The reality is far more intricate and complex." He goes on to explain the role of other factors such as something called secretor status which also influence what he terms specificity of identification.

Although it seems as though he is linking blood type to personality type, Dr. D'Adamo says he is cautious about doing this. Although this notion is widely accepted in Japan, research linking blood type and personality in North America has been sparse.

The key seems to be the role of digestion in health and among the barriers to effective digestion the doctor writes, are the lectins in foods that interact with the blood type. "There is a chemical interaction between your blood type and the foods you eat," he says. Almost everyone has antibodies to dietary lectins in their blood-streams; he asserts that he believes fibromyalgia may stem from intolerance of wheat. (In fact, he says, most people do not tolerate wheat.) He notes that research has shown that the amino sugar glucosamine which is being used by many people with arthritis specifically binds wheat germ lectin.

Blood type has been shown to be linked to certain other diseases he notes; for example, people with blood type A are over-represented among cases of breast cancer. On the other hand, colon cancer seems to have only a slight correlation to blood type.

At 377 pages, the book provides plenty of detail on suggested diets and lifestyle; one problem is that in order to do the diet properly you need to determine whether you are a secretor or non- secretor of blood type antigens, and this you can do only by ordering a home test kit—from the doctor of course.

I found a good deal of value in it, and a lot of the food my blood type is supposed to avoid is in fact food that bothers me, or I don't like. And, my blood type is very, very intolerant of wheat, which is true. I think the most enthusiastic response came from my mother who has been trying to limit her intake of meat in recent years. When I told her that Type O's can have all the meat they want, she said, "Oh, thank God, at last!" and promised to treat herself to a steak that very night. For more information related to the book, see The Blood Type Diet Website.

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Food for Thought and Health

Herbs for Flavor

By Anne McCallum

Herbs are fascinating plants possessing culinary, medicinal and ornamental properties. For those with food allergies and sensitivities, who must adjust recipes to eliminate sensitizing foods, most herbs can be safely used to add sparkle and flavor. Here's a favorite from my herb cook-books.

Coriander, also called cilantro or Chinese parsley, was in use by 1550 BC as a spice and medicine. Its seeds contain essential oil: borneol, coriandrol (55 to 74 %), terpinene, geraniol, camphor, carvone, and anethole. The leaves contain Vitamin A, C, minerals, (calcium, phosphorus, potassium, iron) and coumarins. The oil is antiseptic.

Coriander is an annual that germinates in seven to 14 days, and needs average soil and full sun.

Coriander can be used to flavor many Italian, Indian and Thai dishes. It can be stored refrigerated, wrapped in a damp paper towel, for up to one week. Like other parsley, it freezes well and can be chopped, frozen and added straight to dishes.

Thai Grilled Chicken

2 lb. (900 g) chicken drumsticks or thighs
1 piece fresh ginger 2cm (1/4 inch) long
1 Tsp. whole black peppercorns
3 garlic cloves, crushed
3 Tbsp. tolerated vegetable oil
1/2 Tsp. caraway or cumin seeds
4 Tsp. sugar
2 Tsp. paprika
3 Tbsp. chopped coriander
sea salt to taste

Method:

Score the chicken pieces deeply to allow the marinade to penetrate. Set aside in a shallow bowl. Grind the peppercorns, caraway or cumin seeds and sugar in a mortar and pestle or food processor. Add the paprika, ginger, garlic, coriander and oil and grind. Spread the marinade over the chicken and chill for six hours. Grill on moderate heat for about 20 minutes, turning once. Season, arrange on lettuce, and garnish with:

1/2 cucumber, cut into strips; 4 spring onions, trimmed; quartered limes; and sprigs of coriander. Serve with seasoned rice, curried or stir-fried vegetables, or fresh salads. *Note: the amount of ginger used determines the "hotness" of this dish.*

The Source Book is Back! Order Yours Today!

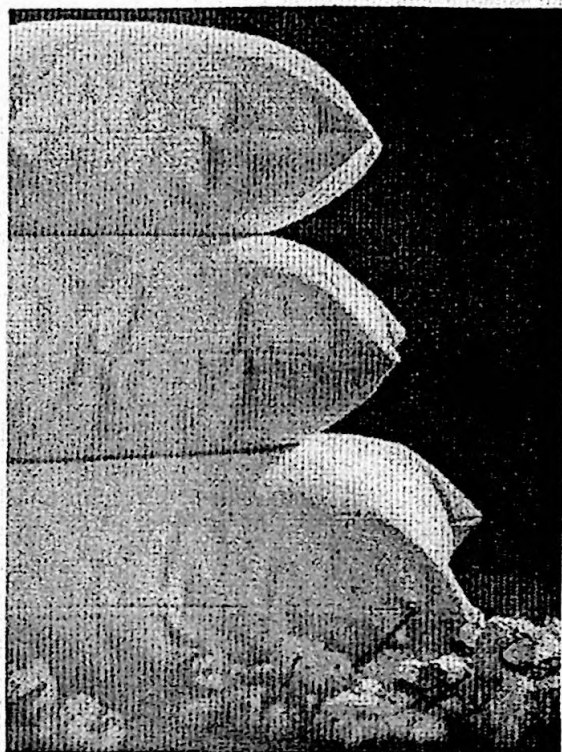
An all-new, updated Source Book for Persons with Environmental Sensitivities has just been published by Ottawa AEHA. The Source Book was first produced in 1996 to offer guidance to people with environmental sensitivities and allergies in this area, and quickly sold out. You will find more than 50 pages of updated sources, including new Web sites and e-mail addresses, for the following kinds of materials and services:

- accommodation and travel
- air cleaners and filters
- bedding, linens and towels
- bookstores
- carpeting
- chemical hazards and alternatives
- cleaning services and supplies
- clothing
- consultants
- dentists
- electromagnetic information
- environmental clinics
- fabric and drapery shops
- face masks and respirators
- food, including organic
- furniture
- garden care and pesticide alternatives
- home inspection
- household goods and housewares
- housing construction and repair
- information
- libraries and resources
- lighting
- mail order services
- office and stationery supplies
- personal care products
- pharmacies
- physicians
- restaurants
- vitamins and supplements
- water

The Source Book costs \$8 a copy (including postage and handling) for AEHA members, or \$10 for the general public. To order, please send a cheque or money order to: Source Book, AEHA Ottawa, Ottawa RPO Shopp/West Box 33023 NEPEAN, ON K2C 3Y9. Quantities are limited, so order today.

Special thanks go to Judith Baril for spending many hours on the telephone over several months to do an excellent job updating *The Source Book*, and to Lynn Cicutti, who produced the original guide. It's greatly appreciated!

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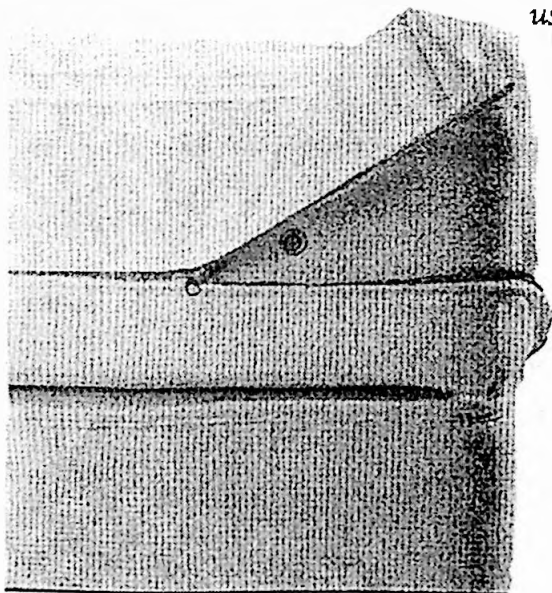
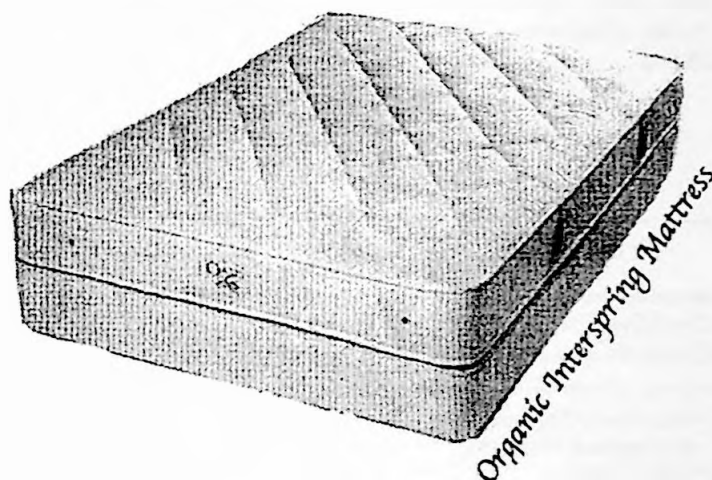


Many of us are choosing a simple, more natural way of life in an effort to preserve the environmental health of ourselves, our families and our world. The production of conventionally grown cotton relies heavily on the use of chemicals, leaving toxins in the soil, water and air, as well as a residue on all cotton fibres harvested. As more and more people become sensitive to

the abundance of chemicals used in the manufacture of everyday items, they are eventually unable to function properly in the chemical soup that makes up our daily lives.

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Web Wisdom

For information on **organic foods and farming**, check out two useful Web sites: Agriculture Canada's All About Canada's Organic Industry at www.agr.ca and Environment Canada's Getting Started in Organic Farming at www.mb.ec.gc.ca.

Find out who is polluting your neighbourhood! Armed with a postal code and an Internet connection, Canadians now have access to a list of the toxic compounds released near their homes, along with the companies responsible for the pollutants. The Web site, www.pollutionwatch.org, is backed by the Canadian Environmental Law Association, the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy, and the Canadian Environmental Defence Fund. (Source: *Canada's Healthy Living Guide*, July 2001)



Clean and Green Eco-Tips

Herbal Bug Repellent

A herbal bug repellent can be made by adding up to 12 drops of pungent essential oils such as lavender, rosemary or mint to 10 ml. of a tolerated cold pressed oil, preferably organic. Mix well and refrigerate. Do not use more than 12 drops as it may be toxic. Note: One ounce is 28 ml.

Cutting boards can be cleaned with undiluted white vinegar (instead of very toxic chlorine bleach).

To clean kitchen sponges wash in the dishwasher attached with a clothes peg or zap the damp sponge in the microwave for 2 minutes on high.

To remove scuff marks from the floor rub with a dry paper towel. These three and more are available at www.heloise.com.

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Library News

To borrow a book one must be a member in good standing. Books are loaned for a maximum of one month. The loan period for recent acquisitions may be shortened depending on the demand.

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Books requested by telephone prior to the monthly meeting may be picked up from and returned to the Librarian at meetings. Books not being returned at the next meeting should be returned to the address below. A selection of popular and current books is provided for

loan at the monthly meetings. Please present your AEHA membership card when you wish to borrow a book. Books may also be borrowed by mail as long as the postage is paid by the borrower. The library is located at the home of Frances McInnes at 2270 Kipling Street, Ottawa, ON, K1H 6T5. It is in Alta Vista and is accessible off Heron and Walkley Roads and Kilborn Avenue.

Donations of books or videos to the library on topics in keeping with the AEHA goals and of interest to members are most appreciated. A thank you goes to the following donors:

CMHC for "The Household Guide to Water Efficiency" (English and French versions).

RECENT LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS

Book Title	Author
Don't Go to the Cosmetics Counter Without Me	Begoun, Paula
Eating Alive	Matsen, Jonn
The Secrets to Great Health	Matsen, Jonn
Why Am I Always So Tired?	Gittleman, Ann Louise
The Household Guide to Water Efficiency	CMHC



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OTTAWA ALLERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Fall/Winter 2001/2 Meetings

If you are looking for support and information about environmental sensitivities and allergies, chronic fatigue or fibromyalgia, you'll find Ottawa AEHA meetings a good place to learn and share information.

Monthly meetings are held at:

McNabb Community Centre
(180 Percy St. corner Bronson & Gladstone)
7:30 p.m. Free. No scents, please.

Thurs. Sept. 20

All about Home Air Filtration

Maurice Lachance, president, Dynamic Air Cleaners, will explain what you need to know about air filtration to improve indoor air quality, and will display state-of-the-art technology that kills bacteria, viruses and mold spores.

Thurs. Oct. 18

Children and Allergy: Recognizing and Treating Allergies in Children

Dr. Ross Mickelson, Environmental Medicine, will address how to recognize and treat unsuspected symptoms of allergy in children.

Thurs. Nov. 15

Candida: Diagnosis and Treatment

Dr. John Molot, Environmental Medicine, will discuss the symptoms of systemic yeast overgrowth and current modes of treatment.

Thurs. Jan. 17, 2002

From Dreamhome to Nightmare: Hidden Health Dangers of New Homes

Linda Leeming, past president of the Canadian Homebuilder's Association, will tell her family's story of toxic exposure at home and her struggle with severe environmental sensitivities.

For more information, call the AEHA Hotline at 860-2342 or (819) 777-5848.